



Winter 2017 Draft Report

Alignment Proposals for the Inyo National Forest and the Town of Mammoth Lakes

Map ID #S05a

March 13, 2017





**Map ID #S05a North Key Agreements
As of March 13, 2017**

- A. Alignment:** This trail is meant to be a soft-surface non-mechanized connector from the Hidden Lake Meadow to the Mill City Staging Area (see Summer Map ID #04 & #16), Panorama Dome, and the Lakes Basin.
- 1. Trailhead and Destination(s):** Mammoth Rock Trail, SHARP #S08 (stacked-loop trail system in Hidden Lake Meadow), SHARP ID #S05b, and the Mill City Staging Area.
 - 2. Naming:** The Bluffs Trail
 - 3. Control Points/Narrative:** Beginning at the intersection of SHARP #S05b South and Mammoth Rock Trail (1), travel downhill (north) 285 feet until you reach the bridge crossing Mammoth Creek (2). The grade between control points 1 and 2 should not exceed 15 percent, which may be accomplished through a series of climbing turns. Once the bridge has been crossed, travel east 115 feet to the intersection of this alignment and SHARP #S16 (3), then continue east-northeast 670 feet to the vista point (4). This section will feature a parallel bridle path. Exiting the vista, continue east, then north, 341 feet to the proposed spur trail to La Verne Street (Benz Way) (5). Begin heading uphill in a northeasterly direction, generally following the existing use trail until you reach its obvious terminus (6). Continue traveling east along the bluff 1,235 feet as trail-design dictates until the alignment begins to switchback sharply south at a rocky outcropping (7). From this point, descend the gully via a series of switchbacks (8). From the bottom of the gully, travel southwest under the rock outcropping 435 feet to a prominent tree (9). From the tree, meander generally south until you reach a prominent boulder (10). Meander southeast from the boulder to the alignment's endpoint at SHARP #S08 (11).
 - 4. Map Reference:** SHARP TTC: Map ID #S05a, 12/02/2011
- B. Design Specifications:**
- 1. Trail Type:** Type 2 (Preferred Equestrian), except the section between control points 3 and 4 where adjacent ADA path may narrow the trail.
 - 2. Users:** Non-motorized and non-mechanized users.
 - 3. Width:** Tread narrow – less than 30"
 - 4. Grade:** Grades may occasionally be steeper than 10%. The grade between control points 1 and 7 should not exceed 15 percent.
 - 5. Surface:** Native materials
 - 6. Features:** The bridge at control point 2 should accommodate stock, be at least five feet wide, and feature a handrail if elevated more than two feet above the creek. Between control points 1 and 2, climbing turns



should be used. Between control points 7 and 8, switchbacks featuring more technical construction, and with steps at a depth of at least three feet, should be implemented. For vista-point information, please see SHARP #S16 Key Agreements.

7. **User Experience/Aesthetics:** This trail features panoramic views along nearly its entire length and offers an alternative route for users wishing to access the Lakes Basin; this helps to mitigate conflict between mechanized and non-mechanized trail users. The unpaved loop opportunities for non-mechanized users that this alignment presents are also an attraction. The section between control points 3 and 4 presents a unique multi-use experience incorporating interaction between ADA and other non-mechanized users, most notably equestrians. This trail, due to aspect, will be accessible in early spring and will have little visual impact thanks to the abundance of manzanita.

8. **Trail Amenities:** None.

C. Winter/Summer Interface: SHARP ID #W07.

D. Signage and Wayfinding Special Considerations: Signage and wayfinding will be consistent with the *MLTS Wayfinding and Signage Standards Manual*. Possible regulatory signage along the bluff (between control points 4 and 7) indicating the need for users to stay on the trail and to avoid private-property interface.

TO BE COMPLETED BY AGENCIES/JURISDICTIONS

A. Environmental Review: "SHARP Projects – NEPA" as submitted to USFS.

B. Construction & Maintenance: Town of Mammoth Lakes under CCS and potentially SUP.

C. Funding Considerations & Ownership: Funding construction through Measure R and MLTS Trail Facilities Construction Reserve Account; ownership via USFS with maintenance provided by the MLTS.



D. Construction Cost Estimator:

Total Linear Feet New Trail Construction	3,931 feet
Total Estimated Cost per Linear Foot	\$5.00
Total Estimated Cost of New Trail Construction	\$19,655
Type of Amenity #1	Signage
# of Amenities	3
Cost: Amenity #1	\$200
Type of Amenity #2	Bridge
# of Amenities	1
Cost: Amenity #2	\$50,000
Total Cost of Amenities	\$50,600
Rehabilitation Cost	N/A
Total Cost Estimate for SHARP ID #S05a	\$70,255

- a. **Total Linear Feet of New Trail Construction:** 3,931 feet
- b. **Total Estimated Cost per Linear Foot:** \$5 per linear foot, with added cost for switchbacks and the bridge.
- c. **Estimated Cost of Amenities:** \$200 for each Type 9a sign. An added \$50,000 for the bridge (control point 2).
- d. **Rehabilitation Cost estimate:** N/A
- e. **First-Guess Cost Estimate:** \$70,255
 - i. **Preferred Alignment:** \$70,255
 - ii. **Alternative Alignment:** N/A

E. Other Special Considerations: There has been significant dialogue between SHARP TTC team members and Bluffs-area residents, as well as a joint field trip concerning this alignment. Please see the attached e-mail correspondence for more information. Additionally, bear-hair collection equipment has been installed near this trail; further information gathering is needed.







SHARP

Sherwin Area Recreation Plan
Trails Technical Committee

SHARP TTC: Map ID #5a

CONCEPT: Soft-surface non-mechanized connector from the Hidden Lake meadow to the Mill City staging area (see Summer Map ID #4 and #16), Panorama Dome, and the Lakes Basin
See The Sherwin Area Recreation Plan (SHARP) for detailed concept and rationale
Map Draft Date 12/02/11

Legend

-  SHARP TTC Trail Alignments
-  SHARP Proposed Trails
-  INF Trails
-  Centerlines
- 10ft Contours**
-  Contour Line, Major
-  Contour Line, Minor
-  Contour Line, Intermediate

SHARP TTC

- The SHARP TTC is committed to staying true to the original wording and intent of the SHARP proposals, as crafted by the Sherwins Working Group, and will therefore not revisit or revise any part of any recommendation unless warranted by agency sideboards or other opportunities or constraints as identified by land management agencies such as the INF.
- This map is for informational purposes and may not have been prepared for, or be suitable for legal, engineering, or surveying purposes. Users of this information should review or consult the primary data and information sources to ascertain the usability of the information.



0 237.5 475 950 Feet





**Project Cover Sheet:
Map ID #S05a**

SHARP CONCEPT	<p>Soft-surface non-mechanized connector from the Hidden Lake Meadow to the Mill City Staging Area (see Summer Map ID #04 and #16), Panorama Dome, and the Lakes Basin.</p> <p>Articulate a soft-surface non-mechanized connector between the Mill City staging area and the stacked-loop system present within the Hidden Lake Meadow on the west end of the Sherwins area (see Summer Map ID #08). The connector will be signed to indicate the level of difficulty and will also connect to La Verne Street, possibly via an existing drainage easement. The trail will be articulated beneath the winter trail where possible (see below and Winter Map ID #07) and will be open to non-mechanized use (no bicycles) year-round.</p> <p>The trail will follow this rough alignment: Beginning in the Hidden Lake Meadow, the trail will head up the south side of The Bluffs through the manzanita, gain the ridge along the firebreak, present a spur to the proposed Mill City staging area, and continue to the west end of the Mammoth Rock Trail.</p>
SHARP RATIONALE	<p>This connector satisfies an existing need to provide efficient, marked travel between the popular Lakes Basin amenities and the frequently used Hidden Lake Meadow at the west end of the Sherwins that avoids conflict with mountain bikes for hikers and equestrians. This feature will provide an important link directly into the stacked-loop trail system (see Summer Map ID #8) and also will allow equestrians and hikers a bike-free alternative to using the Mammoth Rock Trail to access the Lakes Basin. Signage and trail construction (a series of tight switchbacks) will be designed to deter “poaching” by downhill mountain bikers. The specific routing of this trail offers the following benefits: avoidance of the steep existing drainage; spectacular views; good sun exposure, which will allow more rapid snowmelt and therefore early access in the spring; reduction of visual impact via placement in manzanita; and connection to the safe crossing at Old Mammoth Road (see Summer Map ID #15), the Mill City staging area (see Summer Map ID #4), the Tamarack Street trailhead (see Summer Map ID #2), and the Mammoth Rock Trail. Additionally, the trail’s aspect allows the ridge to be gained using only three or four switchbacks, which will make construction easier and result in a gentler, more user-friendly grade.</p>
RELATED PROJECTS	<p>SHARP project ID #W07 - See the SHARP Winter Proposal for details. SHARP project ID #S02 - See the SHARP Summer Proposal for details. SHARP project ID #S04 - See the SHARP Summer Proposal for details. SHARP project ID #S08 - See the SHARP Summer Proposal for details. SHARP project ID #S15 - See the SHARP Summer Proposal for details. SHARP project ID #S16 - See the SHARP Summer Proposal for details.</p>
WORKFLOW CHECKLIST TASK	DATE COMPLETED
Group overview in-house meeting to present work plan and desired deliverables	N/A



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Group overview field trip and technical analysis in-house	Field trips: July 28, 2011; August 25, 2011; September 8, 2011; September 15, 2011; October 4, 2011; October 13, 2011; November 4, 2011.
Drafting/staking	N/A
Technical review field trip	October 19, 2011
Draft revision	N/A
Final review meeting	November 15, 2011
Presentation to USFS	TBD
AGENCY SIDEBOARDS	None.
DESIRED OUTSIDE PARTICIPANTS	Town of Mammoth Lakes, Inyo National Forest
ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW	"SHARP Projects – NEPA" as submitted to USFS.
OTHER NOTES	None.
PARTICIPANTS	2011 Participants: Lesley Bruns, Maggie Palchak, Malcolm Clark, Drew Foster, Charlie Hurd, Mary Blankenbaker, Jonathan Bourne, Doug Will, Chuck Megivern, Kim Stravers, Drew Blankenbaker, Steve Speidel, Keith Dawley, and John Wentworth. 2017 Participants: Joel Rathje, John Wentworth, Andrew Mulford, and Kelly Workman.



Summer 2011 Final Report

Alignment Proposals for the Inyo National Forest and the Town of Mammoth Lakes

Appendix A



Updated December 12, 2011



From: CARL DENZ <ctbenz@verizon.net>

Subject: MLTPA - Comments on Proposal

Date: December 14, 2011 1:40:34 PM PST

To: "drewblankenbaker@mltpa.org" <drewblankenbaker@mltpa.org>

Cc: "johnwentworth@mltpa.org" <johnwentworth@mltpa.org>, Anne Tweet <anne@summitperformance.com>, "mpalchak@disabledsportseasternsierra.org" <mpalchak@disabledsportseasternsierra.org>, Charlene hollander <cb.hollander@yahoo.com>, "cbenz@buckinstitute.org" <cbenz@buckinstitute.org>, "gbenz@grbtv.com" <gbenz@grbtv.com>, William Krauss <wckrauss@hotmail.com>, jamey krauss <jameykrauss@gmail.com>, Kaitlyn Krauss <kaitlynkrauss@gmail.com>, "Thiele, Carol \[NIH/NCI\] \[E\]" <thielec@mail.nih.gov>, Bill Thiele <wftdds@hotmail.com>, jthiele <jthiele@studiotmt.com>

Reply-To: CARL DENZ <ctbenz@verizon.net>

Dear Mr. Blankenbaker,

I am one of the 5 Benzes that own the Benz cabin on the Bluff. I am writing you in response to the notification about the Mammoth Lakes proposed trail system, particularly the portion described for the bluffs. I will be unable to attend any meetings with you this December, and I wanted to make sure you heard my voice regarding the proposed bluff trail. You have already heard from other members of our family, so you are well aware of our long tenure in Mammoth, (since 1956), our love for this community and of this area and passion for passing on to our children's children the same opportunities and environmental opportunities and awareness that we had growing up. Not surprisingly, our government has identified conserving our environment as essential to a healthy and prosperous society. Why should this be important to us? Our nation is growing, which means more people and consumption, which in turn means less resources for everyone and less for wildlife. What's scary is that the rate of increase in increasing, the U.S. is the 4th leading nation in population growth. It is because of this and other reasons I am writing you.

My sister Barbara Krauss wrote clearly about our family experiences with the evolution and development of the community of Mammoth, the changes such development brings, and our understanding that when planned, designed and implemented wisely, is a good thing for the community. And so it is essential that we consider what has already been lost for "the good of community development" as we look forward to ensuring that the beauty of this area (which is probably what attracted most of us to Mammoth Lakes) and conserving the integrity of a fully functioning ecosystem, of which we are all apart, is secured.

I am a professional wildlife biologist, and received my undergraduate and graduate degrees from U.C. Davis and Humboldt State University, respectively. Professionally, I have applied my knowledge and abilities in the conservation of our natural resources for over 30 years. First off, please know that I support trails systems that allow access (including for those with disabilities) and expose people to nature and enhances their appreciation our environment, but trail systems must work with the community (including affected members), allow access but not necessarily everywhere, and work with the environment, not to its detriment. I believe a well designed ADA-accessible overlook (off Old Mammoth Rd.) would be good. However, as a home owner on the bluff, I am opposed to this trail for numerous reasons. Construction of a large trail that promotes horse riding (and the impacts that creates) is insensitive to the local homeowners and has adverse impacts to the environment. A trail that serves this purpose already exists, the Mammoth Rock Trail. There may be other issues that need to be addressed there, but the trail does exist and it makes good planning sense to adapt and manage what already is in place. I am opposed to this trail because of the potential environmental impact, as well. Construction and maintaining a trail system as proposed is challenged with extreme slopes, vulnerable to erosion and difficult and expensive to maintain. Cutting a large swath across the bluff opens up yet more of the area to invasion of non-native weeds that degrade the environment, typically crowding out and out-competing our native plants. The local plant community would also be adversely affected by the increase in nutrients added to the soils from horse excrement (which can also introduce non-native seeds). The excrement also attracts flies and other insects which are undesirable and degrade the outdoor experience of other hikers and likely those who live near the paths used by the horses. This occurs all the time on hiking trails which are also used by horses and is definitely an issue that must be considered when planning such a trail in peoples backyards. The increase in use by people, horses, etc. also has and impact on the local wildlife. Of significant concern is the added affect this trail route would have on the local deer herd and the migratory route this area serves. With all the development on the bluff and near by, we have seen a notable decline in deer use in this area, and we (as a community) should be mindful of our actions to ensure that we are working within the fabric of a natural functioning ecosystem - not diminishing or destroying it, but being a vibrant part of it, ensuring it will continue for it's own right to exist and for the enjoyment of future generations.

As a community, we need to think better about the affects of our actions and what we can do to improve the environment, we need to consciously think about landscape sustainability; and we should have a vision that is committed to conservation of our resources and a healthy environment, not just for us, but for our children's children.

Thank you for this opportunity to share my views and position. I would be happy to work with you and others on this issue. I know that this proposal, as it is further developed, will need to be proposed to the U.S. Forest Service. I would appreciate being notified as to when that occurs.

Sincerely,

Carl T. Benz